

Denis Fitzgerald

Denis William Fitzgerald, AM, (born 14 November 1949) is an Australian former professional rugby league footballer who played in the 1970s for Parramatta, New South Wales and Australia, and a former Chief Executive Officer of the Parramatta Eels and the Parramatta Leagues Club.

As a player, Fitzgerald played mainly as a prop but was atypically tall and lean for his position. Though a strong scrummager and a tireless defender Fitzgerald preferred to run wide where he could be a dangerous attacking force. Remarkably he was Parramatta's leading pointscorer in 1974 from nine tries alone^[1] – proof of their weakness in goalkicking. Fitzgerald's great uncles were Australian rugby league footballers; Bill Farnsworth and Viv Farnsworth.

Contents

honed that he could push aside this challenge, and when success returned in 1997 his position once again became solid. In 2003 he became one of the few rugby league players to receive the Member of the Order of Australia (AM) medal.

As a vigorous opponent of Super League, Fitzgerald has become known for a number of prominent opinions about other football clubs including:

- criticising the joint merger between the Western Suburbs Magpies and the Balmain Tigers into the Wests Tigers in 2000.
- trying to get a Super 12 rugby union club established in western Sydney.
- declaring that rugby league had no place in Melbourne after the Storm's record-breaking 2007 season.
- refusing to honour Ray Price for his services to the Parramatta club.

In 2007, Melbourne Storm defeated Parramatta in the grand final qualifier, drawing a larger crowd than the preliminary final held in Sydney. Fitzgerald was critical of the preferential treatment given to the Melbourne club by television in recent years.

In 2008, Fitzgerald was widely criticised for his views on reducing the NRL salary cap. Australian and New South Wales representative Willie Mason was quoted, "It's the stupidest comment I've ever heard". Other media agencies have reported that if such a move was implemented at Parramatta, a player revolt would have been likely.

Midway through the 2009 NRL season the troubled Parramatta Eels club removed Fitzgerald, then the longest-serving club CEO in the competition's history, replacing him with Paul Osborne.^[2]

In the wake of the 2016 salary cap scandal, Fitzgerald declared he would be willing to help Parramatta in any capacity. He went on to say "If there was something that I could do to ensure that the club was back on its feet, and really employing good governance rather than just talking about it, well I would only be too pleased to given that I've been involved with Parramatta as a player and as an administrator since 1969."^[3] Fitzgerald also said it would take Parramatta years to recover from the scandal, he said "I feel sorry for the players, coaching staff and fans" ^[4]

References

1. *Rugby League Tables*; Parramatta Scorers 1974 (http://afltables.com/rl/teams/parramatta/parramatta1974_sc.html)
2. AAP (2 October 2009). "The Midas touch" (<http://www.abc.net.au/sport/stories/2009/10/02/2703054.htm?site=sport§ion=all>). *ABC Grandstand Sport*. Australian Broadcasting Corporation. Retrieved 26 October 2009.
3. "Former Parramatta CEO Denis Fitzgerald says he's willing to return to club" (<https://www.foxsports.com.au/nrl/nrl-premiership/teams/eels/former-parramatta-ceo-denis-fitzgerald-says-hes-willing-to-return-to-club/news-story/75fd8b0ad30317a05038439e9afd6a27>). 3 May 2016.
4. Thomson, Warren (3 May 2016). "Long way back, says Fitzgerald" (<https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/newslocal/parramatta/former-parramatta-eels-chief-denis-fitzgerald-says-it-will-take-the-club-a-long-time-to-recover-from-salary-cap-breach-penalties/news-story/53bdaa8856885bc4daea6659ffe6f5b6>). *Daily Telegraph*.

External links

- Whiticker, Alan and Hudson, Glen; *The Encyclopedia of Rugby League Players*; ISBN 1-875169-76-8

Retrieved from "https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Denis_Fitzgerald&oldid=1046861753"

This page was last edited on 27 September 2021, at 19:50 (UTC).

Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License; additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization.